

Fitzwilliam Conservation Commission
21 Nov. 2016 – Minutes

Present: Paul Kotila, Chair; Barbara Green; Kevin Woolley, alternate; Rick Brackett, Hiel Lindquist

Absent: Dorothy Zug, Cheryl Norskey.

Guests:

(8:10 p.m.) Terry Silverman, Planning Board; Susan Silverman, Chris Holman, Nancy Carney, Sheryl White, Debbie Favreau —Selectmen's Office.

Review Minutes of 17 Oct 2016

Approved as amended.

Agenda Review:

No additions

Dog Waste Cleanup Bags:

Lindquist and Brackett will watch the weather, and drive the post into the ground without cement for the time being, if possible.

Chamberlain Property—Update:

Nothing new. Waiting on grant awards, which may come in December.

Metzger TF Stewardship Plan Changes:

Kotila and Brackett have looked at them. There appear to be no “red flags”.

Brackett suggested that the general management strategies on page 9 be numbered in order of importance, to reflect the hierarchy of our goals as listed previously in the document.

Kotila will ask that this be done for consistency. He hopes the project will be done this year.

Prime Wetlands — Rick:

Brackett reported that the Prime Wetlands Committee (Brackett, Robin Blais, Susan Silverman and Rick Van de Poll) has nominated 6 units for consideration as Prime Wetlands. In order of importance, they were the wetland complexes associated with Sip Pond, Sportsman's Pond, and Scott Pond, plus three smaller marshes including the Pierce Road Marsh, Martin Road Marsh East, and the North Boyce Brook Marsh, which were selected for their unique characteristics. He welcomed questions or comments and will copy members the proposed edited version of the WPOD regulations. The new WPOD would retain the existing 75-foot buffer but would include a 100-foot buffer for designated prime wetlands.

We need to clarify to the public that we are talking about the wetlands, not the ponds themselves, which are already protected by state law. There will be two public hearings. The first one will be held Tuesday, Dec. 6th, about Prime Wetlands and the updated WPOD.

Members questioned whether we would be using our operating budget toward this project for consulting fees.

Green added that the Volunteer Lake Assessment biennial report for the Monadnock Region is out and has very good information for us. She will email it around.

Later, guests from the selectmen's office arrived to further discuss the Prime Wetlands project. They confirmed that the first public hearing is set to meet with the Planning Board on Tuesday, Dec. 6th. Project director Rick Van de Poll will be there to answer questions. Selectmen wanted to make sure we have the suggested changes to the WPOD ordinance, which will include a prime wetlands section.

Brackett described the Prime Wetlands nominees, why they were chosen, and the WPOD changes discussed earlier.

Debbie will send copies of the edited version to all of us.

S. Silverman liked that there aren't too many selections and they are spread out around town.

Brackett added that the top three nominees are the largest and most diverse wetlands. Also, the Prime Wetlands question will be voted on at the ballot portion of the March Town Meeting.

The second public hearing will be in the beginning of January. It can be publicized in the newsletter. There was a discussion about how to publicize the Dec. 6th hearing, since the newsletter deadline has passed. People should talk to their neighbors.

Asked whether there would be one or six different ordinances, Brackett said there would be one main ordinance, with 6 ordinances to add the nominated wetlands to the WPOD.

There was a discussion of wetland choices, uses, jurisdiction, and other issues, which Brackett said had been addressed in Van de Poll's initial assessment.

S. Silverman said the selectmen don't anticipate tapping into Cons Com funds for the project. They are "just looking for support to move forward".

Holman asked whether the Town currently offers abatements for solar. Members questioned whether a move to adopt this had been voted down, or whether it was a move to rescind an existing abatement, that had been rejected by the Town.

Solar Array Proposal:

Lindquist had shared an email from the Forest Society regarding a Massachusetts electric co-op that had put out a bid for green energy for which Ranger Solar was nominated. All has been quiet otherwise.

Monadnock Advisory Committee Update:

Lindquist reported that the committee met on Nov. 3rd. The state wants to repave the parking lot at the main entrance to the (Monadnock State) park and have 140 spaces. Eventually they would like a fairly elaborate visitors' center, plus a four-season bathhouse. They also want to improve the access road. They had 92,000 visitors this year at that entrance.

Lindquist said he has requested that they figure the “carrying capacity” of the mountain in order to limit the number of visitors. Perhaps they could require preregistration? How should they deal with overflow?

They want to provide more (activities) than just climbing the mountain. The 10-year plan needs updating. The next meeting will be in April.

Site Walk Reports:

None

Budget Reports:

Payroll YTD —\$1001.16. Total expenses — \$821.93.

The budget hearing will be Dec 1st. The CIP committee already met but no one from the Cons Com could make it.

Green will update the budget that we submitted. Kotila and Green plan to attend the budget hearing.

Discussion of Wenniger Property:

Kotila said the conversation with Anne about this continues.

Planning Board:

Minutes went to all members. They discussed an Invasive Species proposal and Shoreline Protection.

Cons Com members discussed local invasives including Japanese knotweed, burning bush, and glossy buckthorn. How could we educate people? They need to know how and when to control these plants

Green attended and shared drawings of a plan for 446 E. Lake Rd., to tear down 2 buildings and build one new 2 story building. It includes a larger holding tank and new well, and will be a year-round house. Green said the plan seems better than what’s there now. Neighbors were in favor. Green requested that we be contacted about such projects in the future.

She added that the board reviewed the Eversource tree planting plans and everyone was happy.

Woolley went to the NHACC workshops. It’s the Town Clerk who has to accept wetlands permits. Only 4 copies are allowed. One should go to the Cons Com — but who gets it to them?

We always were part of the review, but that hasn’t happened for a long time.

We may have to go to the town clerk and ask for our copy.

Woolley also shared a questionnaire on statewide buffers for wetlands. It is due Wednesday. Kotila filled it out. There was a discussion of what to add pertaining to the Prime Wetlands process. Members agreed to keeping the 75-foot buffer, with 100 feet for Prime Wetlands.

Other Business:

No news on the Tolton property.

Correspondence:

Monadnock Conservancy Newsletter; N.E. Wilderness Trust donation request.

Adjournment:

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m. Next will be Dec. 19th, 2016, beginning at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanne Sable, Secretary